1143

VOL. I.—No. 10. MANCHESTER, Saturday, September 26, 1868. Price One Penny.

"So, so;—well done! well done!"
CYMBELINE.

When feeling neither hot nor cold,
When reigns the frost or rules the sun,
We proudly Gee's rare hat behold,
And often cry "well done, well done!"
How soft it feels! how well it fits!
We joy that art so much has won,
And as upon the head it sits,
Gaily we cry "well done, well done!"

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And if he stand on hostage for "this safety," let him demand what pledge will please him best.—*Shakespere.*

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(*From Church Opinion, September 5th.*)

We are much pleased with the *Sphinx*, and wish it every success. It is very cheap, only one penny, and is also very good. It contains articles on local and on general subjects, and is unlike any periodical we have in London. There is nothing sensational, slangy, or vulgar about it. The articles are well written, clever, and amusing. We have marked some for insertion in our pages that our readers may participate in the pleasure we have felt.

The following, among other articles, have appeared in the first ten numbers of the *Sphinx*:—

DESCRIPTIVE PAPERS:—
The Forest of Rossendale. By Edwin Waugh.
Soldiers' Life in Manchester.
Bowdon and the Bowdon Railway.
On the Rialto; or Sketches on 'Change.
Swimming and the Races at Belle Vue.
Sea Weeds from the Coast of Antrim. By Edwin Waugh.
The Schuller-Anstalt.
Ben Langa.
The Manchester Shoddy Exchange.
Manchester Banks: Heywood's; The Union.
At the Moorfield Gardens.
The Grammar School at the Universities.

ART, MUSIC, AND THE DRAMA:—
The Haymarket Company in Manchester.
Buckstone & Co.
Mr. Sothern as the Hero of Romance.
Patti's *Last* Appearance.
London Critics on Manchester Artists
The Pictures at the Royal Institution.

THE LONDON PAPERS:—
1. The *Times*.
2. The *Daily Telegraph*.
3. The *Standard*.
4. The *Pall Mall Gazette*.

RHYMES, SONGS, AND BALLADS:—
Mrs. Grundy on the Hot Weather.
The Cup and the Lip: a Wimbledon Ballad.
Gee's Puffer Out-Puffed.
The Grand Duchess at the Royal.
He would be an Athlete.
The Old Church Bell Ringer.
Beautiful Star.
Not for Joseph: a Lay for a Town Clerk.
Rain at Last.
A Rhyme from Llandudno.
A Stretford Road Ode.
An Enigma by the Sphinx.

THE CHURCHES AND PREACHERS:—
Curates and Rectors.
A Revivalist Camp Meeting at Hollingworth Lake.
Birch Church and its Rector (Canon Anson).
The Free Church of England in Manchester.
History of the Free Church of England. By the President Bishop.
A Strange Preacher (the Rev. Peter Mackenzie).
The Rev. T. G. Lee.
Children and Sermons.
Twenty Minutes with Iconoclast.

MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS:—
A Bit of Local Natural History.
Mr. Councillor Semiterry's Hoff.
Medel Wives.
Phrenology Fowler.
A Snigbrook Meeting on the State of Trade.
Hats and their Wearers.
The Mayor and Many Friends.
My Debut as a Sportsman.
The General Election Races.
Mr. Tennyson and the Queen.
Peter Skelton's Political Creed.
Topers.
The St. Leger.

MANCHESTER: Published by John Heywood, 141 and 143, Deansgate, by whom advertisements and orders for copies will be received, and to whose care communications for the Editor may be addressed.

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SOLDIERS' LIFE IN MANCHESTER.

THE INFANTRY BARRACKS*

NOT the most inviting place in the world, to judge from the exterior, or from a passing glance through the gateway. A "passing glance," indeed, is a mere figure of speech, for a cluster of dirty heads, surmounting a group of no less dirty bodies, perpetually blockade the entrance, suggesting the notion that the barrack-yard must be a sort of modern Paradise, into which these forlorn outcasts fondly gaze, and would as fondly enter, if it were not for the sentry on guard, and the watchful eye of a non-commissioned officer, whose duty it is to prevent all unauthorized or improper visitors from crossing the threshold. Beyond that threshold, however, neither his, nor any other military jurisdiction extends, and so the barrack entrance is blockaded "from early morn to dewy eve," by the little crowd aforesaid,—characteristic specimens of the native population outside, and affording a melancholy illustration of the sort of companions who await the British soldier in the streets and tap-rooms of Regent Road.

A little pushing on our own account, a peremptory "make way, there!" from the guardian red-coated angel at the gate, and we have passed through these unsavoury Peris, and entered the barracks. First, and outside, impressions are correct. The view inside is no improvement. A large, melancholy, dingy square, covered with loose pebbly gravel, which must be most unpleasant to the parading foot; ranges of bare and very dirty-faced buildings, without height, architecture, or beauty;—and—well, and that is all. Four dirty sides of buildings, and a pebbly desert! By no means an inviting prospect, as we remarked before. The architect has so blended together the factory, the workhouse and gaol, that it is difficult to say which style most predominates,—though indeed we must beg pardon—there is no workhouse or gaol of recent date which would not be insulted by comparison. The Salford Barracks are *not* pretty. Like Bunyan's hero, we tumble head over heels in a Slough of Despond the instant we commence our (military) pilgrimage. Fancy living day after day amidst so much ugliness! Fancy the cheerful alternative of a bare, curtainless, carpetless room, with its row of iron bedsteads down each side, and a bare wooden table in the middle, or lounging about this shade-less, tree-less, seat-less barrack-yard!—"Tree-less"! Oh, we beg pardon again. There are a few broomstick-y attempts, which may perhaps come to trees in a century or so, if they do not meanwhile die of smoke and despondency. At present they are only discernible after much and minute investigation, and, indeed, would scarcely be discernible at all if it were not for the wooden railings with which their poor thin stems are protected. All praise, nevertheless, to the private enterprise which bought and planted these vegetables, in the desperate hope of benefiting future regiments, after the dim distance of many generations. It is only owing to the generosity of a regiment which was quartered here a short time ago, that the Salford barracks has anything like a tree at all. But, to resume;—it certainly would not do for us to eat Her Majesty's rations in this region of dreariness. We should be everlastingly breaking out of barracks, and stopping outside when we once got there. And then think of the punishment sure to follow; the confinement to barracks, altogether, for a fortnight, or more, even if we got nothing worse,—but there could be nothing worse; and we confidently recommend Her Majesty's Government, in case they ever remove the troops to other and better quarters, not to alter the present premises, but retain them as a penal settlement for hardened offenders.

Alas! we are afraid that Manchester does not stand altogether alone, as regards the condition of its barracks. We could point to dingy, old, uncomfortable, hideous quarters in many other towns;—instances, where a little money would make a vast change in the comfort and happiness of our troops,—instances also, where a great deal of money would be needed to make them comfortable at all. There have been many improvements of late in army matters. Red-tape knots have been loosened, or cut. Military rigidity has thawed. Reform has stept in, and to some purpose. The British soldier is no longer garrotted with a tight stock, broken-backed with a cumbrous knapsack, crushed under a shako like a dropsical chimney-pot, or armed with a musket which hit once out of twenty times, and then only by chance. His pay is increased, his time of service is shortened;—his spiritual wants are more closely attended to;—his instruction and amusement are catered for by schools, lectures, gymnasiums, reading-rooms, and the like. So far, well! but good quarters are needful to make a good soldier,—we do not mean simply a well-drilled, obedient, military machine, but a well-conducted, moral, contented, stay-at-home soldier,—in short, a really good one. The great problem of barrack life is, how best to keep the men from wasting their time and money and characters outside, in the low public-houses and back slums of the towns where they are quartered;—in other words, to make their barracks their home, in the true sense of the word. The fives court, the recreation room with its papers, chess, draughts, and bagatelle,—the illustrated lectures and penny readings in the school-room,—even the canteen, placed as it has been now for some little time, under the entire control and management of a regimental board,—are all means, and very proper means, for the desired end. But a man cannot be always playing draughts, or listening to lectures, nor is it desirable that he should be constantly in the canteen. Make his room light, airy, and pleasant,—let there be something pretty for his eye to rest upon outside, some greensward court below, trees wherever they can be planted, and will grow, and every device to relieve the dull regularity of a barrack-yard;—let plentiful use be made of outside galleries and verandahs, of paint, and such ornamentation, simple and good, as may remove the above mentioned workhouse-cum-gaol look from the different blocks;—in short, let the barracks be made a place for the soldier to be proud of, a place which his friends and visitors may admire, a place which he cannot match or improve upon in the town outside, nay, which contrasts vividly with the best which can be shown him there; and then, we think the soldier will have a home, and will care for it more than, at any rate, he (or we) would be likely to do for such a place as the Salford Infantry Barracks.

Of course there are some barracks which are capable of no real improvement, except entire re-construction. There are men in every regiment whom nothing on earth will prevent from plunging into dissipation and excess, and consequently from punishment and disgrace. We are aware of both facts. We are also aware that there are places in the world better adapted for the cultivation of grass and trees than the neighbourhood of Regent Road. Moreover, in the third place, we are painfully aware that civilians are not asked or supposed to interfere in military matters. Let us simply say then, that we wish—what we wish,—and so leave the Salford Barracks to its beauty unadorned.

All this time we have been walking slowly round the barrack yard,—past the officers' quarters, with their wooden cupboards of porches over the doors,—then past the hospital, in a corner, with no room to spare outside, and rooms which might be improved within;—then down a long block of the men's quarters, which certainly are not yet "beautiful for ever,"—and so to the other end of the square, to the married quarters, and the school-room. This last, though somewhat sombre, is a good room, and capable of accommodating many more children than are usually to be found in any one regiment. Indeed, such is its size, that it was used for two or three years as the barrack church. Close to this again is the only new, and in any degree handsome building which the barracks

*A companion sketch to the "Visit to the Hulme (Cavalry) Barracks," in the *Sphinx* of August 29th.

possesses, containing the men's recreation and reading rooms. Its freshness serves to bring out in painful contrast the surrounding dinginess of which we have been complaining. In the lower storey we found the materials for all sorts of games,—chess, draughts, bagatelle, &c.; in the upper, a table covered with a variety of papers and magazines, and a library of books better suited to the taste and comprehension of its readers than can be said of many libraries outside. Both rooms are large, lofty, well ventilated, and comfortably fitted-up. On the walls are some good prints, mostly of a military nature, and sundry maps.

Completing our tour, we returned by another long block of buildings to the entrance gate, pausing for a moment to glance into the men's lavatory. Excepting that we wish there were more bath rooms, and that the curse of gloominess did not rest upon this, as upon nearly every other part of the barracks, we have nothing but praise to give to the washing department. We need not say that the men are bound to appear perfectly clean each day on parade.

We confess to a warm interest in our soldiers. Who has not, or ought not to have? We must confess also to a strong belief that the soldier has not been made quite so great a national pet as many other more unworthy characters have been and are. We go off into sympathetic heroics over the sick and needy, the lunatic, the pauper, the criminal. All very right and proper, but don't let us forget our soldier and his home!

SEASIDE VERSUS COUNTRY.

As Summer with its days of languor and heat draws to a close, it becomes an anxious question to the dweller in cities, how to restore tone and tune to body and mind, and how to invest the short period of glorious idleness to be snatched from the solid year—whether, in fact, it were best to bask at the seaside or vegetate in the country. The former with many people is the favourite mode of reorganizing the system. It is so easy to step into a railway carriage, and run down to some watering-place where you are looked on, not as a curiosity, but as a matter of course. You take your rooms for the required time, you come and go, and you return home without attracting any notice or giving rise to any speculative talk. You have the sea breeze to inspire your frame with a wholesome vigour, and the healthy sea bath to send your blood with a lighter leap and in a freer current from heart to head and foot. Then there is the sure prospect of seeing and being seen. "There is society where none intrude"—unless you are a pretty girl—"by the deep sea and music in its roar." You have the laughing tides that lave the children's boots with rising wave, or creep up to kiss the feet of the fairies under the cliffs. And, above all, everything is cut and dry for you. Promenades, newspapers, shops, cars, and barrel organs absolutely force themselves on your notice. The one disadvantage is that you have all these conveniencies at a higher cost and at the price of comfort. On this score a heavy bill may be filed against the seaside as a place of holiday resort. Annoyances inevitable spring out of a life in lodgings to distract those who are accustomed to the quiet order of home. The days are apt to become dreary, monotonous, difficult to drag out. The novelty of nothing to do is pleasing at first, but sunning oneself along the sands or on the pier by day, and mooning about them in the evening and the second watch of the night, soon reduce you to a state of inextricable ennui. At Southport and Blackpool life becomes a burden; the noise, the bustle, and the crowd; the street cries, the street sights, and the donkeys; the dressing, the promenading and the chattering banish all delicious feelings of listlessness, and all quiet enjoyment, embitter the *dolce far niente*, and produce a kind of hybrid and artificial excitement. There are lots of fellows there, moreover, whom you dare not be uncivil to, who cannot and will not talk anything but "shop," many of whom count their short liberty license—to drink as much beer and spirit as they can, on any premises. Your money melts away, and you leave the place at last with no regret, unless you are a single man and have struck up a flirtation—"that last infirmity of noble minds." All this, too, presupposes fine weather. Lugubrious indeed is life at the seaside on a wet day.

The charms of the country are for those who desire, not change of excitement, but change of life. The attractions it offers are variety of interest, relief of eye and mind, with a thorough novelty, and, at the same time, simplicity of amusement, scenery, habits, and people. The craving for something fresh, which seems to haunt the mind in Manchester with the pertinacity of the evil spirit in the parable, is met and satisfied by a continually quiet and innocent enjoyment, the interest of which increases as the spirit of the thing is entered into. The wealth of scenery, which is a luxury to any man with the slightest shadow of a love for the beautiful in him, or capable of a single thought or idea, the calm break in harassing habits, the general feeling of tranquillity, seclusion, and repose, are soothing and refreshing to one whose mind is on the stretch eleven months out of the twelve. Health woos you, insinuates itself into your system. The town, the office, the governor, the ledger, customers, clients, orders, and manufactures, become things as faintly remembered as the toils of the sea were by the mariners who chanced to drift to the land of the lotus-eaters, where it seemed always afternoon. There is always something to enjoy. In one district there is the picturesque hop-picking; in another apple gathering; in a third, sheepshearing; in a fourth, reaping. Now you have mowing, at another time ploughing. Moreover, you can always have something to do. The exploration of some antique ivied ruin; a glorious pic-nic in the woods or under romantic rocks; gipsying, where the utter discomfort of everything and the thorough wretchedness of the older people is not least conducive to merry laughter and genuine enjoyment; a nutgathering expedition, most glorious of all, when you clear a way into the centre of the dense copse and hook down the hazel branches, and tumble over thick briar shoots, or slip suddenly into a hidden brook. Then there is always that noble institution in the country, dinner, a thing worthy the name of which you cannot be sure of at the seaside.

In the case of young people parents are sorely puzzled in discussing the claims of Seaside *v.* Country. We question very much whether the yearly month, as spent by the present rising generation at Southport, Fleetwood, or Lytham, can afford the same delightful and vivid memories in after life which an equal time spent in the country leaves impressed and pictured in the mind. It is in childhood and early youth that the stock of familiar scenes is laid in for life—that the mental picture gallery is formed. Fancy the man who has not a single bit of landscape, however tame, or a single romantic or picturesque rural sketch in that lumber room at the back of his head where memory is supposed to dwell. The pleasantest remembrances of our life still are those afforded by yearly residences at a farm in youthful days. Everything that went on about it, down to the most common and trivial operations, was invested with the halo of interest and romance that the youthful town bred mind is accustomed to throw over them. To rise at five seemed then itself a privilege. We could hardly be dressed quickly enough in the huge kitchen fragrantly redolent of wood or peat smoke. To ride a horse to field beside a whistling ploughboy was happiness incalculable. It was a pleasure to watch the cows milked, and to squeeze out a few drops from a warm teat was ecstacy. In those fond days, hide-and-seek round corn-ricks or haystacks with ruddy country cousins; an al-fresco dinner with the reapers in the fields; smothering one another with hay new mown and rich of perfume; riding back in empty waggons; going for eggs to the hen-roost and bringing back the nest-egg, or occasionally scaring away, in our eagerness, a hen in the act of laying; a peep into the cold, clean, and sweet, but forbidden dairy; or carte-blanche for half an hour among the currants and gooseberries in the garden, were like glimpses of Elysium. The sight of a hare scudding across the fields, or a rabbit scampering into the hedge; of a fox, a hedgehog, or a weasel; of a trout darting through the brook; or of a nest with eggs or young in it, was an event talked of with far more *empressement* than older folks debated of battles and the falls of cabinets. Long before we went did we anticipate the delights in store for us, and long after we came back did we linger over every particular of each day's doings.

There are, however, disadvantages in a temporary country residence. And not least of these is the general notoriety with which a stranger finds himself invested. He goes to a pretty, but small village. He is the cynosure of all eyes, the food for everybody's talk, a nine days' wonder. His looks, his dress, his antecedents, his future, are all discussed. He must have come to court some one, even though he be

married man, or to buy an estate, though he be a poor one. At church there is a large attendance (as the anniversary collection at the next parish church feels to its cost) to see him. As he comes out little boys peep at him from behind gravestones, and older folks remain in a body to criticise him at the church door before wending their homeward way. And the Methodist procession that is singing through the village, stops to gaze open-mouthed at him as he passes. But this is an inconvenience that time and further acquaintance is sure to alleviate, although at first it adds a strange half-humorous embarrassment to the otherwise calm enjoyments of a country life.

HAYMARKET MORALITY.

"AMONGST innocent and wholesome pleasures," writes Mr. Buckstone, "reason, justice, and common sense will ever place the elevating and instructive pleasures of a well-conducted stage." It is a pity that, in his address to Dr. Bellows,* from which the above words are taken, Mr. Buckstone does not say where, in his opinion, "reason, justice, and common sense" place the pleasures of a stage whose manager not only permits his actors to indulge in the coarsest observations at their own sweet will, but is himself the most flagrant example of unbridled licence of the lot. It is another pity that the Rev. Dr. Bellows, whose heroic vindication of the claims of the drama was the cause of the address of gratitude alluded to, and who was in Manchester not many weeks ago, did not stay long enough to see some of the Haymarket Company's performances, and to be able to appreciate, at their right value, Mr. Buckstone's "noble sentiments." Mr. Buckstone's appearance in the character of Joseph Surface is a dramatic event which would create a sensation, if the character were not such a favourite impersonation with managers that we have ceased to be surprised at any one of them assuming it. Nobody is more fond of spouting about the dignity of his profession than your theatrical manager. "Fudge!" He affixes a bust of Shakespeare to his proscenium—perhaps, two or three busts of Shakespeare. "Fudge!" His act-drop is a picture of Stratford-upon-Avon—with the church conspicuous: for your theatrical manager has a great respect for the church, bemoans its alienation from the stage, and glories—as does Mr. Buckstone—in that many of its eminent members have adorned the latter by their works. "Fudge!" Your theatrical manager is great upon the subject of intolerance and bigotry, stands up for the high mission of the drama, declaims about its beneficial influence, affirms the generous nature of actors, and the immaculate purity of actresses. "Fudge!" Above all, he affects a tender concern for the welfare of his art, avers a preference for the legitimate drama, and asserts the vocation of acting to be one of the gentlemanly professions. "Fudge!" All he cares about is to fill his theatre. He will degrade his profession for a round of applause; he will disgrace himself to gain a smile; he will prostitute his art for the sake of a laugh; to raise a ribald roar, he will extinguish it: for the vice of the whole profession, attacked by the virtue of one man, once shut up the drama altogether. The morality of managers is a sham. They are moral, when morality pays; they are immoral when immorality pays. Their morality is the morality of the public, and the morality of the public is *nil*. Let anyone who believes that there is any virtue in the public, recall to mind the behaviour of recent audiences at our Theatre Royal. There you have as respectable a miscellaneous assemblage as any in England, for you have an assemblage of the most respectable people of Manchester. Now mark the conduct of that audience when, say Dr. Ollapod confides his calculations to it, at the end of the *Poor Gentleman*. Recall the scene. There is a pause. You could hear a pin drop. Ollapod deliberately walks up from the back of the stage to the footlights. Expectation is excited. A joke is evidently coming. The audience prepare to be convulsed. Another pause. Ollapod pulls his face into a writhe, which for significance, comicality, and character, no face but Mr. Compton's could be drawn into: what for? To illustrate a pungent jest? To barb a stinging sarcasm? To point a subtle quip? No. To drag the mind down from the contemplation of one of the prettiest betrothals in the range of comedy to a gross, sensual idea. A humorous remark—a characteristic remark—not a vicious remark—but a coarse remark—a vulgar remnant of a vulgar age, when authors wrote for swine. And the audience bear it. A few roar—true, they are low boobies—but the respectable old gentlemen are vastly diverted, the chivalrous young men snigger, the virtuous matrons are amused, and the modest maidens—look as if they didn't understand it. O, what would a modest maiden do without that "look as if she didn't understand it?" Out of all the theatre-full, there are not more than twenty persons who have the common courage to express disapprobation of what insults alike their taste and their understanding—of what degrades the drama from its inherent nobleness as man's most intellectual and glorious delight to its acquired baseness as a mean and coarse amusement for the low. There are worse passages than this, and they are borne. Yet, Englishmen are noted for their courage. O, false fame! All honour, though, to those twenty persons, and may their number grow!

It is not courage only that is wanting. The people of Manchester cannot be such cravens as that a disapproving theatre-full dare not express their disapproval. They sit so still, not merely out of cowardice, but because they have no keen sense of the baseness of indecency. They think it is improper, but they do not feel the burning sense of shame a lover of the drama feels. They have formed no glorious ideal of it in their minds, or these foul words would grate upon their ear with an insufferable sound, and bow their spirits down with an unutterable humiliation. If they knew all that vice has done for the drama; if they had the least conception of the men it has outlawed and the women it has betrayed; if they could perceive how utterly it has ruined a supreme power, how fatally it has corrupted a noble thing; if they felt how an angel from heaven has been trailed through the mire, until once she resembled a devil from hell; if they recoiled from every unclean word—as he who loves the drama must—then, if there is chivalry in man, they would stand up like men, and cover foul-mouthed actors with confusion.

But there is no love of the drama, there is little hatred of vice, there seems to be no chivalry in man. Whole audiences of Manchester men and women have, only lately, night after night, sat out disgusting farces no one can sit out without committing an outrage on the drama, and displaying either a total want of self-respect, or a miserable cowardice. Nearly all farces—with their Wilhelmina Sprigginses and Theophilus John Jones Sparkinses—are contemptible things, but indecent farces are intolerable. Olden indecency was at least witty; modern indecency is stupid, into the bargain. *Founded on Facts* and *Friend Waggles* ought to be hissed off the stage.

But audiences dare not hiss; nor is the press any bolder. In London, there is only one dramatic critic who dare open his mouth; and in the country, the magic name of "Buckstone" silences them all. They fawn upon him with a wretched sycophancy in the morning, after he has shamed the drama overnight. Even in our own town, which is honourably known throughout the kingdom for the freedom and manliness of its press, not one has had the courage to say a word for the drama, morality, and Manchester.

* The Rev. Dr. Bellows, of All Souls' (Unitarian) Church, New York, delivered an address before the American Dramatic Fund Society in 1857, on the claims of the drama. Mr. Buckstone was desired by the profession in England to convey its thanks to Dr. Bellows, and this he did in an address from which the passage above mentioned is quoted.

Here are the best actors in the country—one of whom writes "noble sentiments"—wallowing in the debasement of their art, chuckling over the ignominy of their profession; exhibiting, as part of their entertainment, what has been, since the very institution of the drama, the drama's greatest curse, its own shameful degradation, the victory of its enemies, the ostracism of its professors, the poverty of its sons, and the infamy of its daughters. Selling the drama's birthright of nobility—for a barren laugh! "Amongst innocent and wholesome pleasures reason, justice, and common sense will ever place the elevating and instructive pleasures of a well-conducted stage." O, how the Joseph Surfaceism lies upon the stomach! Mr. Buckstone says he feels assured Dr. Bellows's advice to managers will not be lost upon them: does not he know one manager whom it *has* been lost upon?

Poor Mr. Buckstone! It is not his fault. Their fate is hard who live upon the public. Demoralised they cannot help but be. The public is a vicious thing, and those "who live to please, must please to live." True, this is the plea of every sort of prostitution, but there is no demurring to it. Still, Mr. Buckstone, though you be as vulgar as you like, please don't talk about the "elevating and instructive pleasures of a well-conducted stage." Be as indecent as you choose—you will find plenty of fools to laugh at you—but "damn your sentiments."

HE WOULD BE AN ATHLETE.

JOHN JENKINS was a warehouse wight,
Whose masters made the most of him;
Though in the way of strength or height,
There was not much to boast of him.

Five feet he touched; eight stone he scaled;
His tendencies were phthisical;
And Nature, at his birth, had failed
To grant proportions physical.

But, compensating stature's check,
So great a soul she gave to him,
As nearly made his frame a wreck
That doctors could not save to him.

A big and blust'ring oath he swore:—
"This atomy corpuscular
Shall, by development, before
Three months, grow huge and muscular."

No doubt his resolution baulks;
His hat and will he fixes tight;
Into the A. gymnasium walks
And grasps two fifty-sixes tight,

And heaves them up; but down, nigh-brained,
He fell and wrenched each humerus;
And lay half-stunned, and bruised, and strained
With twists and bumps innumerous.

His joints were sore three weeks and more,
Yet his resolve had altered not;
And all his aches and pains he bore
With Stoicism that faltered not.

"Development is gradual;
Docet experientia;
I by degrees grow bigger shall
Ex parvis sunt ingentia.

I'll row," he says; nor more ado,
In outrigged skiff his seat he takes;
Works back and head, till nigh in two,
His stretcher with his feet he breaks.

But with such force a bridge he struck,
That passers thought it foundering;
And he, thrown out—'twas like his luck—
In Irwell's mud went floundering.

"D'you single-stick?" a friend one day
Asked John. "Oh yes; but decently;
No lungeous hitting—quiet play—
I'm rather out just recently."

En Garde. Down came the blows like hail:
In vain went Johnny dancing round;
His friend's stick falling like a flail
Still sent him madly prancing round.

"That's what I call a quiet bout,"
The friend said, "just a slip or two;
But if you'll get the mawleys out,
I'll let you see a tip or two."

They sparred. He followed up his blows
With rapid regularity;
And treated John's mouth, wind, and nose,
With strange familiarity.

At last a hot right-hander on
The facial protuberance,
He landed, and—alas, poor John!—
With torrent-like exuberance,

Forth gushed the blood. He failed to see
The force of pugilistic tips:
Respectfully declined to be
Put up to sundry mystic grips

At Border wrestling matches tried,
But promised on the Sunday next
To walk to Crewe, and nearly died
Ere home he reached on Monday next.

The festival was drawing nigh:
"I'll train," quoth John, "awhile, I will;
At all the sprints I'll have a shy,
And likewise at the mile, I will."

Long early morning sweats he took,
Abjured tea, tarts, and iniuns,
And made them at the chop-house cook
His steak *à l'Abyssinians.*

He trained and trained, till pale and ill,
He thought all training vanity,
And as he fast went down the hill,
Vow'd it was sheer insanity.

Now broken-windedly he stalks
In melancholy gloom about;
And like a coughing spectre walks
Noiseless, each warehouse room about.

INTERESTING TO ASTRONOMERS.

The vexed question as to whether or not the heavenly bodies are inhabited is not likely soon to be set at rest. We may, however, remind objectors that, from what is known, it is evident that the supposition that they are is quite reasonable. Most persons are familiar with the features of that gentleman in possession—the man in the moon, and it is a fact that can be vouched for by thousands, that in Manchester, on any fine summer's day, persons can be distinctly seen with the naked eye, walking about in the sun!

APPROPRIATE INVESTMENT FOR MISSIONARY FUNDS.—Converted Stock.

THE RIGHT SORT OF ORGAN FOR A CHURCH.—One with a fine moral tone.

OMNIBUS COLLOQUIES.

[DE OMNIBUS REBUS]

SCENE—*On the Knifeboard from Town. Time — Two p.m.*

JABBER.—Seen the *Sphinx* this week, Sir?

SOBERSIDES.—Yes.

JABBER.—Poor number, Sir; nothing in it, Sir; ab-so-lute-ly nothing.

SOBERSIDES.—Some good quiet articles, I thought. The review of the pictures was good, and the *Pall Mall* article interesting.

JABBER.—Oh, I never read those. Give me something spicy, some wiring into somebody.

FINIKIN *(who is dreadfully afraid of Mrs. Grundy, and his own toes).*—I never see the paper myself. Understand it's a low, scurrilous affair.

GROWLER *(whose temper is critical immediately before dinner).*—Some folks are never satisfied with any thing, and wouldn't even read the *Times* or *Punch* unless they had an established reputation.

FINIKIN.—You can't justify that article in the *Sphinx* the other day, "Quizzing Snoggles."

GROWLER.—I understood you to say you never read the paper.

FINIKIN.—Well, that number was shown to me.

GROWLER.—And a few others, I suppose.

JABBER.—Give me something spicy, I say.

GROWLER *(aside).*—Precious little else you can understand. *(Aloud)* Of course you read that paper a few weeks since, about the swallows.

JABBER.—Not a word of it, Sir; not my style, Sir; not my style.

GROWLER.—I should think not.

JABBER.—What I should like to know is this, Sir. Can anybody tell me what are the *Sphinx's* politics?

FINIKIN.—Politics! What do *they* know about politics? They seem to find fault with all the candidates alike, and even make fun of Mr. Bazley, by talking of him as if he was a horse.

GROWLER.—What! you've been reading the Election papers too, have you?

FINIKIN *(confused).*—I did happen to see some of them, quite by accident.

GROWLER.—I wish they'd pitch into the Carriage Company, to keep better time. This 'bus is never to ten minutes at starting.

JABBER.—Now, Sir, what is your real bonâ fide, candid opinion as to Mitchell Henry's chance? Will he get in?

GROWLER.—How should I know; don't see why he shouldn't.

FINIKIN.—Think I shall vote for him, if I see he has a good chance to get in. Bazley and Henry! sounds respectable.

GROWLER.—Yes, you'll reserve your vote until you see who's a-head, and then vote accordingly. Henry's supporters waited so long last time that most of them never voted at all, and left him with his six hundred.

JABBER.—Exactly so, Sir. The charge of the Light Brigade, eh! Some one had blundered, rode the six hundred—that's about the size of it. Curious allusion that in last week's *Sphinx*, Sir, to Mr. Howe's calves.

FINIKIN.—Ah, coarse, very coarse.

GROWLER *(who is possibly thinking of his dinner, mutters something about calf's head).*

JABBER.—Now, Sir, will you just give me your fair, candid, impartial opinion, Sir, about Miss Lydia Becker?

GROWLER *(groans aloud).*

GUARD.—Fares, please.

[*Bell rings. Scene changes.*]

IN-SCREW-TABLE.

An Australian paper has the extraordinary piece of intelligence that "Horses are selling at Gipp's Land for tenpence a-piece." Tenpenny nails have been well known for some time, but we fancy that this is the first time that the majority of people have heard of tenpenny screws.

A MAN OF MARK.—Notably the man who cannot write his name.

STRAP-OIL.—Cobblers' W(h)acks.

SALFORD IN QUEST OF A MAYOR.

WILL nobody be mayor of Salford? And if not, why not? Why should there be a difficulty in finding a mayor for a borough containing at the last census over a hundred thousand inhabitants, a borough which got its charter of incorporation a quarter of a century ago, and which is not like unto (say) Huddersfield, which only got its first mayor a few weeks ago? Again, if the public spirit of the magnates of Salford cannot be stimulated by the prospect of becoming the chief of a municipality containing as many inhabitants as a few of the German kingdoms which died on the battle field of Sadowa, another, if not a nobler, argument remains. The annual value of the property in the borough of Salford amounted last year to very little less than half a million! Is it nothing to preside over the destinies of property, which, if capitalised—say at eighteen or twenty years purchase, would represent in round numbers, say ten millions of pounds sterling! If the municipal or the commercial mind is insensible to the dignity of governing men, it is surely not blind to the grandeur of an office which enables its possessor to play the part of a small destiny over such a complicated Babylon of brick and mortar as seethes and welters on the other side of our inglorious Irwell. That property of Salford can be converted into an affair of arithmetic; we happen to be able to put it in figures. The number of inhabited houses in Salford reaches, within a very few hundreds, no fewer than twenty thousand. Here are twenty thousand families imploring the sovereign supervision of somebody who has courage and leisure just enough to take up the sceptre which is about to fall from the imperial grasp of Pochin! It is not as if Salford men were unfamiliar with the high duties of the Salford municipality. As we have said, they have been accustomed to the great office of municipal government for nearly five and twenty years. They know all about it. The sentiment and the habit generated by the charter of eighteen hundred and forty-four has been sown over the borough of Salford broadcast. Salford is reticulated with the whole thing. It has no fewer than eight wards, every one of which must by this time be saturated with the principle of a mayor, aldermen, and burgesses.

The famine of mayors is inexplicable. At this moment there are no fewer than twelve ex-mayors alive. Can none of these gentlemen—laid up at present in municipal lavender—be induced to enter on a new lease of empire? What is the matter with the sixteen aldermen who sit "aloft in awful state" at council meetings, and are free from the cares and responsibilities of November elections? Cannot one individual in the lot be found who is willing to build a new Thermopylæ in the borough of Salford? To them we would say—

> You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet,
> Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
> Of two such lessons why forget
> The nobler and the manlier one?

Is it possible that out of the sixty-four gentlemen who constitute the Corporation of Salford, none can be found big enough to wear the armour of Pochin, or to blow that resounding horn with which he was wont to awaken the river echoes, or to drain that mighty flagon which erst was the goodly test of Salford manliness?

Alas! how is it with us when this bright and brawny dispenser of delicate "Falern," or the braver brewing of the goodman Bass listens to the enchantment of Westminster? What's parliament to him, or he to parliament? Why should a handful of Stafford folk outweigh the needs of a tenth of a million of loyal Salford citizens? Why should this Timon, after his gay and goodly feasts with not ungrateful or inappreciative guests,

wander away to the wilderness of Stafford, and howl away the remainder of his fair life alone or in the company of Caliban?

But if it can't snow Pochin, surely Salford can snow somebody else. What about Alderman Cawley? Alderman Cawley is accustomed to bridge difficulties; why not bridge this matter of the mayoralty? We cannot fairly affect ignorance of the reason. Alderman Cawley prefers to go abroad to serve Salford to serving it at home. Well, it is the fashion with many of us to think that we can do better that of which we know little, than that of which we have acquired the knowledge and the mastery. A plague o' parliaments if they seduce from their natural allegiance our Pochins and our Cawleys. As this appears to be past praying for, however, what reason is alleged that Mr. Alderman Tysoe and Mr. Councillor Armitage, and, finally, Mr. Alderman Turner, should "decline with thanks" the forlorn and wandering chief magistracy? Are they, too, dreaming of Parliament? Is everybody going to be a candidate for the suffrages of the gentlemen and (here and there) ladies whom personal payment of rates qualifies in the registration courts? Is there nobody left to believe that charity begins at home? There appear to be opportunities in Salford for the exercise of that precious domestic virtue.

In truth, it is hardly surprising that Mr. Pochin is eager to take to his heels in the presence of such a plague-stricken lazaretto as the borough over which he is just now chief magistrate. The highest death rate in England was found last week in Salford. We don't want to say that the accident of a brief mayoralty over a town which has the bad black eminence of Salford in the matter of life and death, renders Mr. Pochin one atom more responsible than every one of the past and present councillors, who, for nearly a quarter of a century, found it a congeries of pestilential human dens and cages, and——leave it so. It is just possible that this may account for the reluctance of the councillors and aldermen, and twelve living ex-mayors of Salford that to assume, or to resume, the nominal supremacy in place of cemeteries—that paradise of undertakers. In truth, it is a grim kind of honour. One can imagine a Salford personage talking with the Stanleys and Salisburys of parliament about the borough of Salford. One can see with what dexterity he would carry his conversation in any direction but that which leads to the question of the salubrity of Salford. One hears, in imagination, the deprecating and apologetic twitter with which he flutters away from the con—founded conversational apparition. The thing is a ghost. These Salford people, at whose respectable doors all this premature and preventible slaughter lies, cannot surely sleep in their beds, like honest Christian folk. If in Salford, in one night, from every little room where death is, the roof slowly arose, and there lay revealed to the stars that silent company of dead children, white with the majesty of death, and powerful in their slain and accusing innocence, we should cease to wonder that people don't want just now to be Mayor of Salford, and that the office is rather the embodiment of a dark and ineffaceable reproach than one to which an honourable man would be eager to aspire.

Since writing the foregoing lines, we learn that Mr. Alderman Davies has consented to accept the perilous responsibility of the Salford mayoralty. Evidently Mr. Alderman Davies is a courageous gentleman. He is the Curtius who is willing to leap into the gulf to save the community. We understand that Mr. Alderman Davies has already done good service on Salford Sanitary Committees. If we are not misinformed, this gentleman has evinced a respectable amount of public spirit. He has a great opportunity before him.

SWEETS FOR SPORTSMEN.—Game preserves.

MUNICIPAL FISH "OUT OF" WATER.

WHILE all the summer long we have been revelling and luxuriating in the glorious sweltering weather, that almost makes one fancy the world to have been turned upside down and England to have become its own Antipodes, the Waterworks Committee have been ruefully contemplating the not improbable exhaustion of the supply of water stored away in their immense reservoirs at Woodhead. They have been reduced to a state which would make a rainfall a complete windfall to them and the town. Everybody knows the consternation produced by the announcement—the water's off!—and the inconvenience caused by a temporary stoppage of the circulation of the city's blood. But a permanent lack of water is a disaster the consequences of which are beyond the powers of the imagination to pourtray. We should all be fish "out of" water in that case. Even the teatotallers would be compelled to drink beer and make their tea with spirits!

No wonder then, that the Water Committee have had much anxiety and more trouble about the water supply this summer; and they may well, on this account, be forgiven a little self-complacency and angling for sympathy.

At a meeting of the "waters" lately held, it was determined to turn the water on for eight hours a day only. The Manifesto, or rather Bull, in which they embodied this resolution, as printed in the *Guardian*, is about the finest piece of corporation composition we have come across for some time. It occupies, although only consisting of eleven sentences, nearly half a column. Who can have written it? We know they have in the Town Hall, somewhere, one who *can* write—at least certain of his rhythmic compositions were for some time the delight of the town. To whom can the duty of penning the announcement have been delegated? For the business of the Committee itself, we take it, is—Water, not English grammar, the art of reading, writing, and speaking the English language with propriety and correctness. Whether, however, on this occasion, the nature of this the business in which by their municipal capacity they have been immersed, and the copious supply of the limpid element they claim to have provided for us, have had anything to do with the flow and copiousness of their style, we cannot say. So long-winded and involved are the sentences which wind meandering on with many a circumbendibus like a drunk man trying to walk down several streets at once, that one might imagine each sentence to have been written with a fountain or reservoir pen and only brought to a conclusion with the "dip." We confess in the following to have got completely beyond our depth:—

"The committee have every reason to be satisfied with the disposition manifested by the occupiers of the mills, for whose benefit such compensation water is secured by act of parliament in every way to meet the Corporation under circumstances of unprecedented difficulty, fully recognising the fact that, without abandoning their claims to reasonable compensation for any actual loss or extra expense sustained, the supply of water for the requirements of the inhabitants for domestic consumption must and ought to be the paramount consideration with the Corporation."

Who's who, and what's what, and who are they in the above? Not a whit less excruciating is our next quotation:—

"When the inhabitants consider the reports appearing constantly in the papers of the very short period (varying from one or two to three or four hours), during which water is supplied to the inhabitants in neighbouring towns, and in other cases of the entire failure of all supply by the authorities, they have every reason to congratulate themselves that the Corporation are, after such a period of drought, and notwithstanding the large demands upon their works, still able to propose to supply water during eight hours of each day, and thereby to afford an ample opportunity to all to obtain the quantity of water absolutely required."

This is truly aldermanic in its proportions. We should like to know if the period during which water is supplied to neighbouring towns is from one or two to three or four hours a week, a month, a year, or a century; and what "the entire failure of all supply by the authorities" means. Why should "the inhabitants in neighbouring towns" be said? We are at a loss to find a reason for these curiosities of literature unless it is to be found in the fact that people are always rather apt to stammer and blunder when singing their own praises. The committee while attending to "the water of the corporation" have forgotten to remember that there is such a thing as "the English of the Queen." We would suggest for the future that the clerks to the Town Council be

subjected to a competitive examination in English composition and précis before their appointment, and that to them be entrusted the composition or revisal of documents or encyclical letters intended for public perusal. We should thus be spared the pain of witnessing the distressing struggles of municipal fish out of water.

MANCHESTER BANKS.

THE UNION.

THE maxims "Union is strength," and "Vis unita fortior," still hold good, notwithstanding the discrepancies of opinion on the complicated questions of union between Church and State, repeal of the union between Great Britain and Ireland, and the union between the Northern and Southern States of America, maintained by conquest. These are subjects which have of late vexed the nations, but into which it is not our province to enter. Union is a term which indicates, or is intended to indicate strength, solidity, and security, hence it has always been a popular title for a Banking Corporation. Thus we have had the Union Bank of Scotland, the Union Bank of Ireland, the Union Bank of London, the Union Bank of Australia, the Union Bank of Liverpool, and finally, our present subject, the Union Bank of Manchester.

The Union Bank of Manchester, which has upon its cheques and drafts an engraving of two hands grasping each other, indicative of its name, commenced business in 1836, a few months before the Manchester and Salford Bank. The business of the bank was carried on for many years in Brown-street, on premises which are now pulled down, and the site occupied by the dining saloon of the Clarence Hotel. The paid-up capital of the bank is £414,931, with a reserve of £90,000. Some years since the bank availed itself of the new act of parliament, and was converted into a Limited Liability Company. It has five branches—two in Cheshire at Knutsford and Northwich, one in Salford, one in Swan-street, Shudehill, and one in Oxford Street, near All Saints' Church. When the bank first commenced business, it was managed by the usual stereotyped board of directors, and a manager from London who is still to be seen about the Manchester streets, looking as gentlemanly and well as he did thirty years since, but who has not been connected with the bank for nearly that length of time. He was succeeded by one of the directors, who became general manager. This gentleman, although a Manchester tradesman, had quite an agricultural appearance. He had flaxen grey hair, a florid complexion, was of stout build, and wore a soft white neckcloth without shirt collar. His coat was also cut after rustic fashion with ample skirts and capacious pockets suggesting the idea that they contained samples of beans, oats, and other farm produce. In fact you would have expected to meet with him at an agricultural show, punching fat beeves, and critically examining prize pigs, rather than putting a batch of commercial bills through a similar scrutinizing process behind a bank counter. A manager who reminds one pleasantly of mangold-wurzel is not a bad figure-head for a bank.

As the interior of the Union Bank has always been hidden from the vulgar gaze by a mahogany screen, and is as mysterious and impenetrable as the Sphinx itself, we are unable to reveal any of its peculiarities to the reader. Mysterious voices come from behind the screen, and at intervals a small trap door opens, as it does in a pantomime, only instead of Harlequin jumping through, cheques are swallowed up and drafts and letters of credit make their appearance through the aperture in about one tenth of the space of time in which the same conveniences are supplied to you at the Pan-Anglican, or Branch Bank of England, in King-street. When the South Lancashire Bank gave up business, the Union Bank took their premises in York-street, and took the old mahogany screen with its pantomimic doors along with them. We regret to observe that most of the old familiar faces in front of the screen, and some others which that polished obstacle occasionally allowed us to see, are gone. In the earlier years of the bank, the tall commanding figure of the chief cashier was a familiar object. This gentleman had such a prodigious reach of arm, that he always gave us the impression, on holding out his hand for a cheque, that he was going to seize us by the scruff of the neck, and drag us across the counter. There is a story extant, although for the truth of it we don't pretend to vouch, that one foggy day in November, when Jones, Loyd, and Co's bank in King-street was lit up by a few yellow, guttering tallow candles, a felonious individual suddenly entered the building, and, reaching across the then narrow counter, thrust his hand into the till, and possessing himself of a handful of sovereigns, made off with impunity. We rather think this could not have occurred if Mr. J. K. Mansell, of the Union Bank, had been behind the counter, but that the robber would have had to submit to the process above alluded to. This gentleman was an inveterate snuff-taker, and he could hand you over batches of bank-notes, sovereigns, silver, and his snuff-box so quickly, that you scarcely knew where to begin; and what with counting, snuffing, and sneezing, one was apt to make a mistake. Mr. Mansell and his agricultural manager have long been dead, and it is only recently that his colleague Mr. Prince has taken leave of bank notes, and all such filthy lucre for ever, and the Union Bank scarcely looks the Union Bank without him. This gentleman always had an agreeable word for his customers; if not pressed with work he was open for a short chat, and frequently had a bit of late news to communicate. In fact, in front of the screen, business used to be carried on in a more free and easy manner than at most other banks, always excepting Loyd's, before it was absorbed by the District Bank. That venerable establishment in Mr. Jervis's time beat everything for taking things coolly, and even excelled the Pan-Anglican establishment in somnolency.

Bank cashiers and tellers, however, have not generally much time to gossip with their customers, and have their hands pretty full. First, they have to see at a glance, when a cheque is presented, that the signature is not a forgery; then they must be acquainted with the state of the account against which the cheque is drawn, and not have to retire into the interior to refer to the ledger concerning the balance. Customers are most jealous of such proceedings, and have been known to refuse to do business with banks where they were had recourse to. Then, there is the danger of the teller paying his customers too much, as was the case in Glasgow the other day, where a cheque was overpaid several hundreds of pounds, and it has been found totally impossible to get the money restored. It requires experience and constant practice to become an expert at detecting the difference in hand-writings which closely resemble each other. Generally, clerks brought up in the same office unwittingly form their hand-writing after some popular model. We have seen three partners in one firm write so like each other, that it was next to impossible to tell any of the three's signatures from the other, and none of the three partners themselves could tell which was which. Much might be said on this subject, but in the interests of security and honesty we forbear to dilate upon it. The despatch with which business is carried on at the counters of most of our banks is creditable to them, and contrasts favourably with the dawdling circumlocution which prevails at the Post Office Money Order Offices, where it seems to be a difficult matter to give or cash an order for a couple of sovereigns, and the insouciant nonchalance of the clerks would try the temper of Job himself.

In spite of the mahogany screen we still, however, occasionally obtain a glimpse of two familiar figures, who have been connected with the Union Bank since it commenced business. One is the present general manager, and the other is Mr. John Bradbury, head porter. For many years one or two of the directors have taken an active part in the management of the bank, and attended there daily. Lately Mr. Malcolm

Ross has been elected a director, a judicious appointment we should think, as Mr. Ross is very well known and equally well liked. The Union Bank has had a good business connection with the German merchants in Manchester, and gets credit for having done a pushing business. Of late years it has shown considerable enterprise and energy in establishing bra ches, and has now five, as mentioned above. We believe that most of these branches have equalled the directors' expectations, and that their deposits in Salford are very considerable. We are disposed to think that the establishment of bank branches, in different parts of an extensive city like Manchester, reaching from Harpurhey and Pendlebury to Stretford and Longsight, will turn out to be a great public convenience, and induce many people to keep bank accounts who never did so before, and who are, indeed, diffident about entering such palatial-looking buildings as some of our banks, for the purpose of depositing modest sums of money. The late Mr. J. W. Gilbart, managing director of the London and Westminster Bank, who was a very shrewd man, and the facsimile in appearance to the Rev. Canon Marsden, was of opinion that everybody should keep a bank account, and if the enormous deposits of his bank, and the promiscuous nature of the depositors, are to be taken as a criterion, his advice seems to have been pretty well followed. Branches, established in populous districts, could scarcely fail to pay eventually, and facilities would be afforded to all the small shopkeepers, licensed victuallers, and greengrocers of the neighbourhood, to adopt habits of thrift and economy.

From the foregoing remarks it will be seen that, although the Union Bank has not some of the peculiarities belonging to the other banks which have been noticed in these series of sketches, it has nevertheless an idiosyncracy of its own. It is not filled with Scotchmen, like the District Bank, with a natural and industrious aptitude for figures inside the building, and a liking for haggis, cock-a-leekie, and singed sheeps-head at their own homes. Its officers and clerks have not the same piscatorial and entomological propensities which used to characterize the gentlemen attached to Brooks's Bank. Neither do its managers and officers indulge in piles and columns of statistics, and the manufacture of essays, poems, and other harmless conceits, like those of the Manchester and Salford Bank. We don't know what goes on behind the screen, because with all the steadfastness and earnestness of its gaze, the *Sphinx* cannot yet see through an opaque substance, but we should imagine that the clerks don't spend half their time toasting their shins at the fire, as Jones Loyd's clerks used to do, while their customers stood in front of the counter, waiting and gazing at them in a sort of comatose state of fatuous vacuity. Probably the managers and clerks of the Union Bank could show that they possessed all these accomplishments if they chose to try; and have they not their own characteristics? They have their mahogany screen with its trap doors, and that estimable functionary Mr. John Bradbury, who looks as young as he did thirty years since. Finally, they have their Chairman of the Board of Directors, a most agreeable and affable gentleman, who, if he is not in the habit of writing "Royal Roses," can at all events "call *spirits* from the vasty deep," and can sing an uncommonly good song. Should any of our readers wish to see the Harlequin performance with the trap doors, they have only to step inside, and ask for a seven days' bill, when a draft upon Glyn, Mills and Co. will be handed to them in as short a time as it takes that spangled gentleman to dance a pas-de-deux with Columbine on the stage.

QUERY FOR THE KNOWING.

Can a man who invests in a pair of tight boots be justly considered as a foolish speculator in corn?

What the pugilistic champion of England may be said to have arrived at—The Mill-any-on-'em.

CRITICISM CRITICISED.

[THE GRAMMAR OF THE TIMES.]

AN article which is itself confessedly critical naturally invites criticism, and it may therefore be allowable to remark that the critique dramatic in the "leading journal" of the 11th instant was scarcely a critique grammatic. The very marked increase, by the way, during the last few months, in the number of misspellings, misprints, and other mistakes in the columns of the Great Infallible, must have been apparent to the least observant reader. We don't of course, allude to such little orthographic peculiarities as "diocess," "riband," or "holyday," for all which the *Times* has been persistently going in for some years past. The errors to which we refer are simply indefensible blunders—such, moreover, as were of comparatively rare occurrence in years past. In this respect, truly—*Tempora mutantur*! Our concern is with failings syntactic rather than orthographic. The subject of the article in question is, as we have intimated, dramatic. After speaking of certain amateurs and foreigners as "attempting the delineation of the highest characters of our national drama *by a combination of ignorance and vanity*" the critic treats his readers to the following phraseological curiosity:—"Differing, however, to some extent from most of these, there has appeared at the Lyceum a Mr. Fairclough, in the crucial character of Hamlet, and by so doing has invited the most candid criticism." Our "candid criticism" on this sentence is that it is particularly inelegant, even if it be English, and as the defect is remediable, in more ways than one, by a very slight alteration, the writer is the more inexcusable. A little further on we have—"Though endowed with striking features and a good figure, and otherwise not wanting in physical grace, *Mr. Fairclough's voice* is deficient in tone," *i.e.*, Mr. Fairclough's voice, though "endowed with striking features and a good figure," &c. If this be correct, the actor must surely be a notable instance of the Vox *et præterea nihil*, must be, in fact, a "Vox tantum," like the languishing nymph of whom friend Naso* sings—"Vocalis nymphe—resonabilis ECHO,"—and who was undoubtedly "endowed with striking features and a good figure," besides being "otherwise not wanting in physical grace." But more and worse. "*The violence* of his own death spasms," the writer tells us, "*are* prolonged and painful," while directly afterwards, as though to compensate for so singular a plural, we have—"The sense *and* force of the passage *is* almost lost if these points are not attended to or ignored—(*i.e.*, we presume, or *are* ignored). There remains for citation yet one more curious passage. "This is, however," writes our critic, "wholly apart and *independent from* that feeble traditional method of ranting," &c. This is surely pretty well for one short critique. The hot weather has beyond doubt much to answer for, and Homer, we suppose, must (especially in such a season) be occasionally allowed his little nod.

* Better known to the youth of the North Countrie as O-vid.

A BRIGHT IDEA.

We had often heard of "frames of mind," but were not very clear as to what use they could be put to. A brilliant genius has, however, solved the difficulty by discovering that they are the very things in which to mount mental pictures.

ALL IN THE DOWNS.

A most distressing case was brought to notice the other day. A poor cobbler in the attempt to make both ends meet, lost his little awl.

"That smack's of the soil!" as the toper said when his nose kissed the earth violently.

LIGHT BEVERAGES.—"Comet" wines.

THE GIRL OF THE PERIOD.—Sal Volatile.

'BUS GUARDS.—Ladies' veils.

THE BISHOPS OF THE FREE CHURCH.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.]

SIR,—Having read your two articles on "The Free Church of England," may I ask you to enlighten me on the subject of its episcopate, about which, in the absence of proof, I confess that I am rather sceptical. Whence is it derived? When and how was Mr. Price the "President-Bishop" consecrated? I do not remember any secession of Anglican bishops in modern times, and certainly not of any Roman ones; and the bishops of neither communion could or would consecrate bishops for another body. It is easy for anyone to assume the title of bishop without having the slightest claim to it in the sense in which it has been used for eighteen centuries. Witness the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, which is not an Episcopal Church at all, although having that form of government. They applied, some years ago, if I mistake not, to both the American Protestant Episcopalian Church and to the Church of England for consecration, but the request could not be acceded to: and so they called some of their ministers "bishops." Has the Free Church of England *bona fide* bishops in the same sense that the Roman, Greek, and Anglican branches of the church Catholic have? Can they show the link which binds them to the chain of an unbroken succession to the earliest times? If not, better far in these days, when one has to give a reason for everything, call themselves Congregationalists or Presbyterians, and say with them and other sects that "they do not hold episcopacy to be necessary," than assume the title of an episcopal church without having the essentials. I will conclude with a quotation from your paper of the 15th of August last. "The clergyman at Broughton Lane is a congregational minister, who has not the slightest objection to the Church service, nor to the surplice, and who, in fact, thinks that connection with the State is a very moot point. The Free Church recognises episcopal ordination, &c." Has this clergyman been re-ordained? Because, if they recognise episcopal ordination, they could not accept a congregational minister as validly ordained any more than the Church of England can, much as a large section of her clergy would like to do. Your articles on the subject are very interesting and open out a very wide question, but as I only write for information, I cannot go into it now.—I am sir, your obedient servant,

J. H. D.

Manchester, Sept. 8, 1868.

CONNEMARA.—The "Manchester Man," whose hints to tourists in Ireland were quoted in the *Sphinx* of September 5th, desires us to correct two typographical errors. "Twelve Piers" should read "Twelve Pins," the popular name for a well-known range of mountains in the County Galway, "pin" being only a corruption of the Irish word "ben," meaning "prak" or "summit." "Mann" should have been printed "Maan," the Irish equivalent to "pass."

CURIOUS ADVERTISEMENTS.—The advertising pages of the *Era* are a fertile source of funny announcements. In the last issue, "a good scene painter, who keeps sober during business hours," is advertised for. What the painter does after or before business hours is, as Mr. Toots would say, "of no consequence." Here is another advertisement from the same columns—"A trained horse wanted. Small, light, and handsome. Accustomed to stage, rakes, fire, &c., and not already well known to the public."

SWIMMING IN MANCHESTER.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.]

SIR,—In the article headed "Swimming and the Races at Belle Vue," you say "swimming needs popularising in Manchester, and that the only means is for one of the Athletic Clubs to take it up, float it, and give it the same estimation which running, rowing, boxing, &c., have." You propose such a Club instituting competitions for medals and other prizes, such as would make the public desirous to go and see them, and incite the young to emulation and more universal practice. In justification of the gentlemen amateur swimmers of this city, I must inform you that they have taken the matter up and formed a society strictly confined to gentlemen amateurs. The Manchester Swimming Club is, I think you will agree with me, well floated, when I inform you that, although only in existence since September 1867, it now numbers between 90 and 100 members. The Club has this season given several gold, silver, and bronze medals in addition to the President's Cup, and next season they purpose offering cups to be swum for by gentlemen amateurs: 1st, for the championship of the Club; 2nd, for gentlemen resident in Manchester; and 3rd, open to the world; in addition to many other gold, silver, and bronze medals, which will also be offered for competition. I am in a position to say that the Festival held on August 12th, at the Subscription Bath, Mayfield, (although swimming is not yet so popular as athletic competitions), was eminently successful, the space allotted to spectators being so thronged that numbers were refused admittance. I beg to disagree with you that swimming is at low water in this city, since Manchester men both professional and gentlemen have proved, no later than the present season, that they are equal to compete with men from any part of the kingdom. I wish also to add that it is the unanimous opinion of those who were present at the Aquatic Festival, that it was got up on a scale not only never before attempted in this city, but in any other city or town in Great Britain. I think, therefore, you must agree with me that the M.S.C. are doing all they can to further the objects for which the Club is formed, and to make swimming a gentlemanly sport and recreation.—I am sir, yours obediently,

G. H. MOSS, Hon. Sec. M.S.C.

7, Grove Street, Ardwick Green,
Sept. 10, 1868.

PROVERBS FROM SHAKESPEARE.—There is no virtue like necessity. Two stars keep not their motion in one sphere. The better part of valour is discretion. There are few die well that die in battle. The empty vessel makes the greater sound. Beggars, mounted, run their horse to death. Bounty, being free itself, thinks all others so.

MAKING AMENDS.—Everybody has heard the story of the man who being called on to apologise for saying some one was "a bigger fool than he lobked," made the *amende* by saying that the gentleman was *not* a bigger fool than he looked. The *Daily Review*, an Edinburgh journal, has be doing something of the same kind. A little while since it inserted, under the "Deaths," the demise of a Mr. W——, whereas that gentleman was alive, and objected to be killed in print. So this week we have the following odd correction:—"*We regret* to find that the announcement of the death of Mr. W—— is a malicious fabrication."—"You're dead, Mr. W.," says the *Review*.—"No, I'm not," says Mr. W.; "I'm alive and well."—"I'm sorry to hear it," answers the amiable journal.

AN AMERICAN'S RUN THROUGH ENGLAND.

A American, who has resided many years in London, recently had occasion to visit Scotland, and passed through England for the first time. This is his account of the journey:—

The journey from the south of England to the Scottish capital is full of interest. There are grand transformation scenes like those in a Christmas pantomime. Taking the western route, you traverse a rich and beautiful agricultural country, with its fields now laden with a golden harvest, and plunge into the ugly horrors of the Black Country, which reminds you of the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel. Hundreds of square leagues of land are covered with heaps of ashes, cinders, the waste of coal-pits and furnaces. Factory chimneys two or three hundred feet high stretched away like a great forest to the horizon, each belching out its clouds of smoke, while even in the bright sunshine the mouths of hundreds of furnaces are tipped with orange-coloured flames. Nowhere is the earth so deformed. The whole country is mined. Great towns are over coal-pits, and might sink into them. Grimy men and women work in this world of ugliness until they become as coarse, and hard, and horrid as the region they inhabit. Women and children work as smiths, hammering hot iron from morning till night. Women work in brickyards, up to their eyes in wet clay, striking bricks in the moulds, and carrying them out to dry before burning. Woman's right to manly labour is unquestioned in the Black Country. A few years ago women and girls worked naked in coal-pits harnessed like cattle to the cars. Parliament stopped that—so there is really progress. Still, when I saw groups of women working in a brick-yard, doing what is considered the hardest work in the world, the terror of Egyptian bondage, I thought a Woman's Rights Convention in the Black Country might be a good arrangement. An English iron manufacturer some months ago sent to the *Times* an account of his observations in the coal and iron districts of Belgium. He found neat and elegant buildings, nice gardens, a beautiful country and no smoke. The Belgians are too economical to fill the whole atmosphere, over hundreds of square miles, with dense clouds of unconsumed carbon. They burn all their coal, and have a clear sky and bright sunshine into the bargain. The frightfully ugly aspect of this country must be every way demoralizing. Formerly it was notorious for its ignorance, drunkenness and brutality. Respectability tucked up her skirts and fled; the Church sorrowfully resigned her mission here, and sent one to Africa. Of late years the Methodists and teetotallers have been at work and with considerable success.

Northern Lancashire is sweetly rural, and every mile's progress northward made the fields more green and the foliage more vivid. It was a journey from a brown August to the fresh verdure of early June. So, passing through the busy towns of Preston and Lancaster we entered the Lake District, Westmoreland, Cumberland, with bold mountains, silvery lakes, clear rivers, a lovely region, which seemed all the more beautiful from its contrast with Southern Lancashire, where the earth is full of black burrows, and thousands of chimneys belch out sulphurous flames and blackness. Here, among the lakes and mountains, is something left of the rural England of the olden time. Here is still a yeomanry owning the soil it cultivates. There are good stone houses,

nice gardens, pretty farms and woods. The people are not merely day-labourers crowded into wretched villages, leaving the broad land a desert. In a word, it seemed like home. I passed Windermere, Ulleswater, and Keswick on the left, hastening on to Carlisle, at the head of Solway Frith, the last English town on the West, and a few miles from Gretna Green and its famous smithy, so celebrated in the fast novels of our grandmothers. Carlisle is an old town with a history. Its castle was occupied, if not built, by the Romans. It has suffered from sieges and assaults in the wars of the borders. CROMWELL tore down a portion of the Cathedral and defaced the rest, using the chapter house for a magazine. Over the three Kingdoms you meet everywhere the curse of CROMWELL. On the pavements of Carlisle you hear the same clatter of wooden shoes that makes a feature of street life in South Lancashire. After my experiences of the Plow Inn at Cheltenham, where I was thoroughly taken in by a moral title, I have been wary of hotels. So, landing at 9, I took my small luggage in my hand, walked into the first neat and comfortable-looking tavern I found, went up to the bar, where sat a jolly fat landlady and her pretty daughter, and rather astonished them by saying, "Madame, is this a swell hotel? because if it is, I don't want to stay in it." "And what is a swell hotel?" asked the puzzled, Northern and benighted landlady. "A swell hotel," I replied, and tried to make it impressive and memorable, "is one where they charge you three prices, and give you only one accommodation." The good lady allowed that her's was not a swell hotel, and I put up, and had the most bountiful provision at the most moderate price.

The English are shy, cold, distant, suspicious. Their ways and manners are not cordial. They never invite people to visit them, or to call; there are no general invitations. You are expected to come, if acquainted, without being asked. In travelling and among strangers, the best way is to break through the crust and find the man inside it. Sometimes he is hard, or the crust is hollow. Plenty are stolid, stupid, hopeless. But, on the other hand, if you are enterprising, and disarm suspicion or excite interest by letting them know you are an intelligent foreigner, you may find plenty of people worth knowing. Englishmen are apt to be wary of each other. Then, they all read the same papers, know the same things, and bore each other. They like to find a man free from their restraints and in conflict with their prejudices. England freezes Americans at first, but though we are not popular *en masse*, individually we have not much to complain of.

From Carlisle to Edinburgh the mountains, the sweet valleys, the pure streams singing over their rocky beds, and the fir trees, all reminded me of New-England. It wanted but the fields of Indian corn. So we passed the grand forms of the Teviot Hills, and with glimpses of Abbotsford and Melrose, arrived at this grand city of Edinburgh. It is beyond comparison the finest, most picturesque, most imposing town in the United Kingdom. No description can do justice to its natural features. Bold, craggy mountains, wild glens, lovely valleys, castles, palaces, temples, the architecture of a thousand years, the most romantic and thrilling historic associations, are all clustered in Edinburgh. The history, romance and poetry of Scotland all centre here. Here on this great rock stands the castle where Queen MARY was imprisoned, and gave birth to JAMES VI. of Scotland, and I, of England. Down there, sleeping in the calm valley, is the Palace of Holyrood, where RIZZIO was murdered. I do not propose to say much about them. Read the *Scottish Chiefs* and the *Waverley Novels*.

PORTER.—Porter was invented in the year 1731, by a London brewer, named Harwood, who combined the flavours of "half-and-half," or "three threads," as it was then called, in a beverage which he was pleased to call "entire but." The new combination took, in the city, among the "porters," and from its new patrons it obtained its name. . . . But there are still vexatious antiquarians who declare that the honest liquor (honest at least in its youth) never derived its name from the brawny porters of London, but on the contrary, derived it from Harwood's practice of having his new beverage *portered* or carried round to his customers' areas, in shining pewter pots in long covered racks; his pot-boy shouting "porter," to announce their auspicious arrival, as they rat-tat-tattled at the door. More than a century this brown mantling liquor — thin, slightly watery, but pleasant and heartening—has gone frothing up in the pewter pots of London; and may it go frothing up for ever! Good porter should have fullness, potency, and flavour; it should not be thin and vinous, like good ale; for it is of humble origin, has no blue blood in its veins, and is only a sort of cousin-german of that fat, merry, laughing knight, old Sir John Barleycorn. Good porter should be made from black-scorched malt, made from good sound barley, of a uniform chocolate colour. The burnt sugar contained in the scorched malt and the mucilage, imparts the odour to porter, and gives it its fine flavour and tenacity.—*All The Year Round.*

DINNERS FOR DIVES.—With or without conscience, it is astonishing how much some men will spend on a dinner. The ordinary prearranged dinner at the Rocher de Cancale, even when consisting of only ten covers, cost in 1847 about forty francs a head, exclusive of wine. At Tailleur's the charge was usually three or four louis a head. It was at one of these dinners that the celebrated Cambacères laid down his knife and fork, and exclaimed, with grateful enthusiasm: "M. Tailleur, one could not dine better even at my house!" A dinner was given to Lord Chesterfield, on his quitting the office of Master of the Buckhounds, at the Clarendon. Thirty persons sat down. It was ordered by Count d'Orsay, an epicure of the highest taste, and the price was six guineas a head. A dinner got up at the Albion, under the auspices of Sir William Curtis, cost the party between thirty and forty pounds a piece; but then special messengers had been sent to Westphalia to choose hams. Lord Southampton once gave a dinner at the Albion, at ten guineas a head.

Josh Billing's says that "if a man proposes to serve the Lord, he likes to see him do it when he measures corn as well as when he hollers glory hallaluyer."

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications for the Editor should be addressed to the *Sphinx* Office, 143 Deansgate, Manchester. Every manuscript should bear the name and address of the sender. All contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage. No replies or MSS. can be delivered on personal application.

BACK NUMBERS of the *Sphinx* may be obtained on application to the Publisher, or by order from any Bookseller and Newsagent.

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